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OrnJuce

Volume 8, Number 5

August 1987



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ACAOC OrnJuce

Volume 8, Number 5
August, 1987

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Last month's cover art was created by Mike Fulton using DEGAS Elite. This month's cover art was done by Paul Wu.

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All articles are available on Atari 400/800/XL/XE 5.25" and Atari ST 3.5" format disks to other publications sending a blank disk and self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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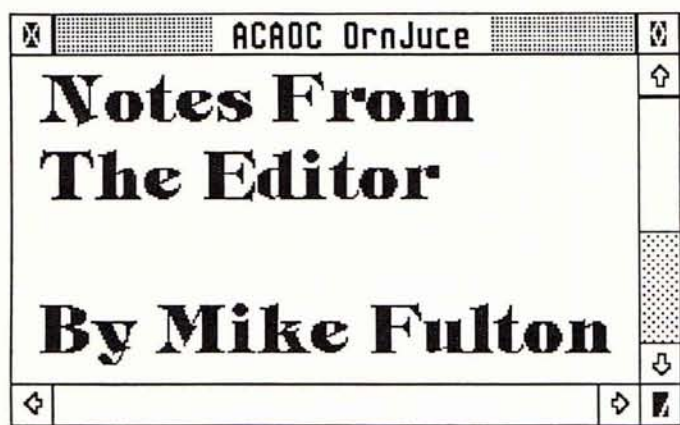
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Book of the Month

Actually, I have two books this month. First is a new Star Trek novel by Diane Duane and Peter Morwood called *The Romulan Way*. (If you aren't a Star Trek fan, you may wish to skip past this part.) It's about a Star Fleet Intelligence agent who is undercover on the Romulan homeworld. It's been too long since Star Fleet has heard from their agent, so they send Dr. Leonard McCoy, of the *USS Enterprise*, on a highly dangerous mission to covertly examine her and determine if she has turned over to the Romulans.

The Romulans, who call themselves Rihannsu, are very closely examined in this book. In fact, the book is very much like two books in one: the story of the undercover agent and Dr. McCoy, and a history of the Rihannsu people. Both subjects are covered a little bit at a time, jumping back and forth from one to the other. Towards the end of the book, they start to converge somewhat, and the story shifts its main emphasis to the McCoy-agent part.

The historical accounts of the Rihannsu people may be more interesting than the other parts of the book to hardcore Star Trek fans. A lot of thought and detail went into this book in this department. I'll tell you a little to grab your attention.

You see, the Rihannsu were originally from the planet Vulcan. Thousands of years ago, the Vulcan philosopher Surak was laying the foundations for the Vulcan philosophy of suppressing emotions and using logic alone to make decisions. Slowly, most Vulcans began to follow this philosophy. But some did not agree with this philosophy, and many began to finance a huge fleet of starships with which they intended to leave Vulcan to find another planet, even though they did not have any Warp Drive capability and the ships would take decades to reach their destinations. Eventually, the fleet of ships left Vulcan, and those that survived the trip ended up at what became the Rihannsu home

world. The book details this Exodus and Rihannsu history since then.

I highly recommend this book to Star Trek fans, although it might be a bit hard to follow for other people. It doesn't really focus that strongly on that part of Star Trek that most people will be familiar with. Dr. McCoy is the only character we've seen before, and we don't even have a single scene on the *Enterprise*. This story seems to be intended basically to develop the background of the Star Trek universe, with Dr. McCoy used mainly to link it in some way to something we are already familiar with.

My other book of the month is *Into the Out Of*, by Alan Dean Foster. It's a Fantasy/Horror novel that just came out in paperback.

The idea here is that there is another dimension linked to ours, and although they are usually separated from one another, the barrier is weakening. Strange, demon-like creatures from the other side, called the Shetani, are coming through to our world, where they are causing all sorts of so called 'accidents' and 'natural' catastrophes.

The place where the barrier is weakening is in Africa, and the elders of the Massai tribe seem to be the only people who know what's really happening. One of these elders comes to America to recruit two people to aid him in his task to seal the barrier. He finds Joshua Oak, FBI undercover anti-terrorist agent, and Merry Sharrow, who works in a surplus store in Seattle. Eventually, he convinces them he is telling the truth and is not crazy, and they decide to help him.

The main portion of the book takes on a traditional fantasy "quest" type of approach, where the main characters have to slowly make their way to where they can attack the enemy on their home ground. The choice of surroundings, and the way that the characters interact with them, is a big part of what makes this book interesting, because the overall plot really doesn't offer anything new or original. But even if you read a lot of Fantasy, you might not notice this. In fact, it didn't occur to me until I was writing this. If it was set in some fantasy "middle-earth" type of world, and used elves or dwarves instead of the Massai, and the Massai elder was a wizard, the plot would all seem very familiar. But it's not, and the way it is presented is enough to make it very interesting and fun to read.

Well, I suppose I should say something about computers, but I really felt like telling you about these books. How about a computer joke? How many programmers does it take to change a light bulb? None! It's a hardware problem!



ACAOC Club News

Expired Memberships

Doug Anderson, Le Roy Bainbridge, Jeff Bertuleit, Harry Brice, James Brophy, Larry Brown, Bert Chalawsky, Bill Cousert, Steve Dixon, Charles Everts, Jim Fleming, Donald Foster, Charles French, Jon Green, Hal Held, John Hershberger, Philip Jakubik, William Jimenez, Doug Keller, Mike Kirkbride, Jim Kline, John Lavrakas, Richard Lindquist, Michael Lingo, Mike Mace, A.L. Merrill, Craig Moulton, Leo Moos, Charles Rick, Jack Rodrigues, Ronald Roslawski, Leo Roth, Dan Sherlock, George Shultz, Robert Stroup, Andrew Tait, Jay Tomlinson, Ron Wonsetler, William Wright

The above members have until the next meeting to renew. If you are a BBS user you will be changed from registered to non-registered the day after the next meeting.

August Membership Expirations

Joe and Florence Frisbee, Carl Grinstead, Steve Johnson, Bob Mistofsky, Brandon Murakami, Jeff Reid, Chuck Williamson, Les Bancroft

September Membership Expirations

William Archer-Burton, Don Dixon, Carole Farr, K.B. Lal, John Hung, Mark Marusak, Calvin McLaughlin, Tom Mynar, Tom Underhill, Jr.

Welcome to Our Newest Members

Robert Bridgeman, Cedric Cunanan, Richard Horton, Paul Mushkin, Toshiyuki Ihira, John Line, Jack Phillips, Jason Rimmer, Randy Metrick

Something Goofed

The mailing list for the club is kept by me (Erika) on an Atari 800 using a very old version of Data Perfect. I have three back-up disks for the information so that nothing can go wrong that can't be fixed easily. Well... at the August meeting some of our newer members complained that they did not get their newsletter so I carefully checked my file cards with the data on disk. Lo and behold, 10 people had been dropped accidentally, and two people have been getting 2 newsletters. I hope all is corrected now. Those who were dropped from the files now have two months added to their expiration date. My apologies go to: Dan Coakley, Barbara Dugan, Robert Goslin, James Hollis, John Irwin III, Alan Mayer, Patrik Mullen, Bill Padden, Fred Schultz, Matthew Stern.

I would love to convert our files to the ST but don't have any idea which data base program to use. We need to be able to print both rolodex cards and mailing labels (in zip order). I need to printout a list of our membership in: member number order, in alphabetical order, and in date of expiration order. The present files have 13 fields per file so we have a lot of data to store and move around. If there is anyone who can help me please call me at 546-9482. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Again, very sorry to those that missed getting the July issue of the newsletter. It had to be newer members - darn. --Erika Bentley

ST Library Report

In the last library report I said the ST software catalog would be available on a subscription basis, but I've changed my plans and the catalog will now be available for free. I've wanted to do this since taking over the library and thanks to an idea of Sharon Brown's, (the club's 8-bit librarian) I can. Sharon's plan to make a copy of the 8-bit catalog and circulate it among club members by mail is a wonderful idea and I'm going to follow suit.

To do this, I'll make a list of interested ST user's names and addresses. Then, I'll mail the list and the catalog disk to the first person on the list, who will copy the disk and then mail it on to the second person on the list. The second person will copy the disk and send it on to the third, and so on, until the disk returns to me. Every two or three months we'll repeat the process to update the catalog.

Disk of the Month

The June disk of the month was a utilities disk which included the desk accessories ROCP.ACC,

RAMBUFFER.ACC, NEWWORD.ACC, TI59.ACC, INITDISK.ACC, MOBZUTIL.ACC, and TYPEWRIT.ACC, plus the utilities ACCLOAD.PRG, AUTODATE.PRG, YARD.PRG, FASTRAMD.PRG, FLDR2DSK.PRG, PRINT.PRG, CONTENTS.TOS, DCOPY191.TOS, DISKLABL.PRG, MACMENU.PRG, RDCV2.TOS, VOLUME.PRG, and PRINTQUE.PRG.

ROCP.ACC (Read Only Control Panel) reads the desktop.inf file and sets the system parameters after they've been configured by the control panel, thus making the control panel unnecessary and saving about 10k of RAM.

RAMBUFFER.ACC is a configurable ram disk and print spooler accessory. It can be installed as any drive from C: to I: and has a command to flush the print spooler without rebooting if the printout isn't right. The print spooler can be as large as 64k, while the size of the ramdisk depends on available memory. Configuration can be saved so the ramdisk doesn't have to be reset after every boot.

NEWWORD.ACC is a text editor accessory with features like word wrap, cut and paste, block save and delete, insert, repeat line, and undo. It can also set the system clock, set an alarm, set the desk colors, use multiple text styles, delete, rename, print, copy, and append disk files, as well as view the disk directory. Newword appears in a resizable window, can handle about 4000 lines of text, and contains its own 4k print spooler.

TI59.ACC is a desk accessory that emulates the TI59 calculator down to the Texas Instruments logo on the face plate. The calculator includes memory, trigonometric, and square root functions, as well as many others.

INITDISK.ACC is a disk formatting program. As a desk accessory, it can be called from inside any program with a GEM menu. It's especially useful in telecommunications applications, where the program can't be stopped to format a disk.

MOBZUTIL.ACC is an extension of the desktop commands, made available in a desk accessory for use from within any GEM program. MOBZ Utilities allows drive selection, shows directory contents, disk and file information, free ram, and will copy, rename, move, and delete files.

TYPEWRIT.ACC is a typewriter program. It displays a typical GEM text editing window with markers to show placement of return and destination addresses on a legal size envelope. A line of text can be typed and corrected with the backspace key, and then sent to the printer when the return key is pressed. This is a great program for short notes and envelope addressing.

Also on the June Disk of the Month was the program ACCLOAD.PRG. Placed in the AUTO folder, ACCLOAD.PRG allows you to choose which accessories to load on boot. There was also

a hard disk version of this program.

AUTODATE.PRG is another program for the AUTO folder. It requests the date and time on startup, (unless the system is equipped with a battery backup for the keyboard clock/calendar chip) and maintains the correct time after resets.

YARD.PRG is a reset-proof ramdisk which is installed on boot by placing it in the AUTO folder.

The program defaults to a 100k installation on drive D:, but can be configured by changing the program name (changing the name to YARD250G.PRG will install a 250k ramdisk as drive G:). This is one of the best and easiest to use ramdisks available.

FASTRAMD.PRG is another AUTO installable ramdisk, but isn't reset-proof like YARD.PRG. FASTRAMD.PRG can also be installed from the desktop by clicking on the program, and defaults to a 100k ramdisk on drive D:. If a different configuration is desired, a file called RAMDISK.INF does the job (enter 200F for a 200k ramdisk on drive F:, 150E for a 150k ramdisk on drive E:, etc.).

FLDR2DSK.PRG is an AUTO folder utility which copies the contents of a folder (named CPY2RDSK) to a ram disk installed as drive D:.

PRINT.PRG is a desktop utility for printing files. It has five mouse-clickable buttons labeled List, Print, Book, Page, and Cancel. List prints a file as a listing, print outputs the file exactly as stored on disk, while book, the best format for text files, inserts pagebreaks and increases the left margin to center the text on the page. Page advances the printer paper, and cancel does just what it says.

CONTENTS.TOS saves a listing of a disk directory to disk. It can save disk directories A: through E: and the directory file includes folder contents, file sizes and creation dates, the number of files and folders on the disk, as well as the number of bytes used and the space remaining.

DCOPY191.TOS is an exceptionally powerful utility. Written entirely in assembly language by Ralph Warden, DCOPY has the ability to arc and unarc files, display file directories, create folders, format disks, rename, copy, and delete files, and display and scroll text files forwards and backwards. The program has too many other functions to mention, and despite the lack of a GEM interface, is one utility everyone could use.

DISKLABL.PRG, is, as its name suggests, a disk labelling program. It doesn't stop there, however. Label size is selectable by the user and printer control codes can also be entered on a separate form, so the maximum capabilities of any printer can be used. The number of labels to be printed can be entered in the program and the label entries can be saved to disk for later reuse.

MACMENU.PRG is another program for the

AUTO folder. It prevents the cursor from accidentally crossing the menu bar and dropping the menus into the workspace. To access a menu requires moving the cursor up to the menu bar and then clicking the right mouse button. Clicking the right button has no effect anywhere else on the screen unless it's a command used by a program.

RDCV2.TOS, which stands for Reasonable Disk Copier, Version 2, is a disk duplication program best used for multiple copies. It reads the entire contents of the source disk into memory and then copies to a destination disk in drive A:. On a system with two drives, RDCV2.TOS will alternately copy to both drives and the user can copy as many disks as desired without having to reload the source.

VOLUME.PRg is a tool for changing the volume name of a physical or logical drive, selectable from drive A: to drive L:.

PRINTQUE.PRg is another program intended for AUTO loading. It creates a 64k print spooler so the computer may be used while a file prints out. Also included with PRINTQUE are programs to stop the output and flush the print spooler in case of an error.

MAYDAY, MAYDAY

The library sold only three of these disks in June. Why? Doesn't anybody use utility software? Or does everybody already have all they need? Sales of other disks have been slack, too.

We currently have over one hundred disks in the ST library, giving us one of the largest public domain libraries around. I've tried to develop the library to have something for everyone, but at this point I would like to appeal to the ST users in our group for guidance. I'd like to know a few things.

What are your primary uses for your ST's? What software are you using? What kind of software will you purchase in the future? If you've obtained software from the public domain library, what was it? Was it any good? Was it useful (or entertaining)? Was it trash? (If it was good, I'd like to know so I can pass the information along to other users in the form of a review. If a program was trash, I would especially like to know so I can drop it from the library.)

With as much good stuff as we have, there's no reason to keep junk bloating the library. If you've never tried any public domain software, how come? Do you have any suggestions for improving the library? Or, to put it another way, if you were public domain librarian, what would you do to increase interest in the library?

I would like to hear some comments on these

things. Either speak to me at the meeting, leave me a message on the club BBS, call me on the phone, or write me a letter care of the ACAOC. (Death threats can be made anonymously.)

-Garry Jones-

Thoughts From The Throne

Bob Brodie, ACAOC President

HELP WANTED: APPLY HERE!

I was a little disappointed after the July meeting. It seems that there are so many things to do to get the club where it needs to be at. Let me share some of my thoughts with you.

First, our meeting attendance needs to go up. Please, come to the meetings!!! There are no finer hours to spend with other Atari computer users!! If you have a hardware question or problem, bring the item with you. A software problem, bring the disk! But in any event... COME! It isn't always possible for your club officers to be able to answer your pleas for help at any other time than a meeting! Further, you may not be the only one with the problem! Someone else PROBABLY has had the same experience!!!

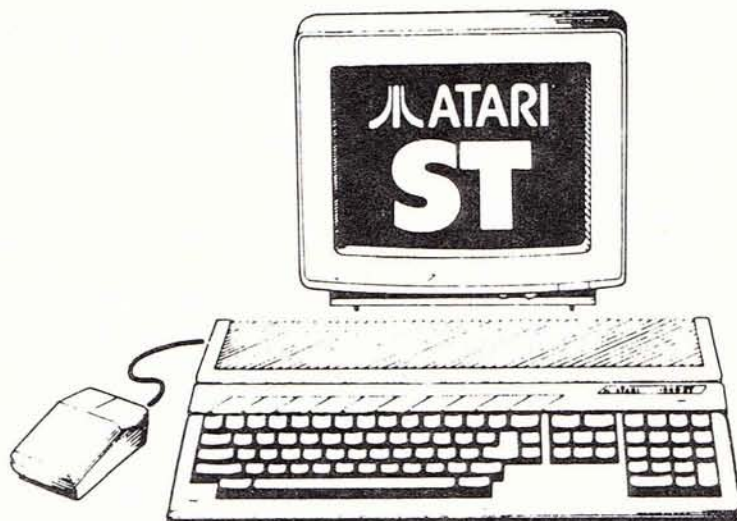
To help our attendance, I have secured special speakers for the rest of 1987! Each meeting we will have a personality from a professional firm that deals with the Atari Computer line! Month to month, it will vary as to 8-bit or ST emphasis. I'm trying very hard to strike a balance here, but that is a very difficult task, as there is much more coming out for the ST than the 8-bit right now.

Here is how things look for the rest of the year:

September: Frank Cohen, President of *Regent Software*, will be on hand to share all about the entire line of Regent Products for the ST. Frank has some terrific stuff out already; I own both Regent Word II and Regent Base 1.1. They both use the GEM interface very well. Frank has also announced plans for a public domain version of GDOS! Frank is frequently found on Delphi, GENie, and CompuServe. He is a contributor to ST-Log as well.

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October: *Miles Computing* will be at our meeting. They are a local software firm, based up in the San Fernando Valley. They will be on hand to show off their ST games. They produce a series of military style scenarios, like Harrier Strike Mission and ST Wars. They have a new game they are just preparing to ship, and they are bringing their chief programmer to discuss the games fully! Maybe he'll even share some of his programming techniques with us!

November: *Monogram Software*, makers of the program Dollars and Sense, will be on hand to show off their software. They have a revision of Dollars and Sense under way to make the program even better, hopefully we'll get to see the new improved version! This is another locally based firm, located in Torrance. This is a first for them: they have never been to an Atari group to show their product. In fact, they sounded like they haven't done many user groups at all, for any computer!!

December: *Astra Systems*, a local manufacturer of high quality disk drives for both the 8-bit and the ST will arrive. Astra was last with us about two years ago, it will be nice to see Lou and Drew bring their own special brand of wit and wisdom gain! Be sure to bring all those questions about using the double sided drives to the meeting. Astra also distributes TOP-DOS; a very fine, density smart, high speed DOS for the eight bit. Those of you that are thinking of changing DOS for personal usage would do well to be on hand just to see this terrific DOS in use.

That wraps up the rest of 1987! Almost all of these are fully confirmed. I have also made contacts with *DataSoft*, one of the brightest stars for the 8-bit owner! We're talking about having them come out in January. They are presently getting ready to ship the next portion of the Alternate Reality series: The Dungeon! It took them three man years to create the dungeon, and are they excited! They have lots more on tap, too!!!

They are currently preparing a line of programs to allow the eight bit user to develop title screens for video tapes, and... well maybe I'd better not tell all just yet! They are also working on some other exciting games for the eight bit users. You'll not want to miss this meeting. Sam Poole, President of DataSoft will be our guest.

Activision's Bill Holt has also agreed to come to one of our meetings. I'll be working out the details of his visit to our club in the very near future. I've also initiated a contact with a local company that distributes Computereyes, to have them come and show off both version of their digitizer.

Analog has one of their staff editors that lives here in the Southern California area, Charles F. Johnson. I've "typed" with Charles about appearing at the Atarifest, next will be to have him at our club.

Many of you may know Charles from his Delphi nom-de-plume of CFJ. He is a very competent programmer on both the ST and the eight bit Atari, as well as being a professional musician. Some of his better known programs on the eight bit include G: (a terrific printer utility) and Koalashow, (allows XEs and Axlon/Rambo XL's & 800s to use Ramdisks to store and display pics!) On the ST, he is best known for his FONT TRICKS! desk accessory, to install different fonts on the ST. Of course he also writes reviews that keep him up to date with the latest and greatest of the happenings in the Atari world.

In short, I'm trying very hard to supply us with quality demonstrations of what Atari computers are capable of doing. But, the only way that you'll reap the benefits of my efforts is to **COME TO THE MEETINGS!!!** I hope to see our attendance come up markedly in the next few meetings. If none of these people trip your trigger, don't be left out, and don't just sit and pout: tell me about it! I don't know what to change without direct input from you. I think that this is the largest list of special speakers that we have ever had in a year. Certainly it is the most consecutive speakers we've had. Please, if you want us to continue to have this level of high quality speakers, support THEM with your attendance!!! All of these folk seem to talk to one another, or know somebody who knows somebody. If we don't return their courtesy by attending, then in the future they won't attend either. Naturally, it works the other way, too. Good experiences are shared, and then it becomes easier to solicit for special speakers.

Secondly, for some time now, our club has suffered with becoming what I call the Mike & Bob show. That means that either Mike Fulton or I provide all the fireworks, and most of you sit on the fencepost. That is going to have to stop. Part of the way it will stop is by having more guest speakers, to eliminate the need for Mike or me to have to conjure up something.

But even with the guest speakers, I would like to have at least one other demo during the course of the meeting. That may mean rehashing some 8-bit material. I think that is OK, as we have a number of members now who may not have experienced some of the 8-bit things that are available for them to use.

Specifically, I would like to see a reworking of the last meeting, which was intended to be centered around printer usage. I am asking that someone step forward who is very familiar with

the Xlent series of "printware" for a future meeting. Ideally, we'll get a response from at least two people, one to show off the 8-bit, another to show off the ST.

These are very powerful programs. They have "xlent" capabilities to create and print wonderful screens. That would give us at least three printer utilities to show off (TypeSetter, Rubber Stamp, Page Designer on the 8-bit, maybe even PS Interface!)

The idea of color printing, and using the "underware" series of printer ribbons to create fancy iron on designs is appealing, too. I understand that several of the color printers out are capable of printing on overhead transparency as well, though I've not seen it done (HINT HINT!!). I'd like to have another demo, or more accurately a tutorial on using the Xlent series for the ST, too. Last meeting, we had a color ink jet and color dot matrix printer on hand. I'd like to try to get those back, along with an Oki color printer at the same time. Maybe I can even talk a local dealer into bringing down one of the Xerox color ink jet printers. Wait until you see the pictures that it does!!!

There is hardly anything that sells computers to non-users more effectively than the ability to generate something (whether it is data, music, or art) and then put it a usable, non-computer retrievable form. That is to say, a printout! I know that a lot of you are doing creative things with your computers, it's time for you to come out of the closet and share with us all!

I really need to get a response from you concerning this matter. I cannot be all things to this club. I can, and will do the best I can to provide you with good knowledgeable people to share their expertise with you.

I like to think that I am a pretty competent user. But I really blew the last demo where I tried to use TypeSetter ST/Elite to do a color print out of a Degas picture. And I'm sure it wasn't the programs fault! There are plenty of you guys out there that know a lot more than I do. Your club will reap the benefits of your expertise, and you will reap the pleasure of having helped others. I'm really open to almost any kind of stuff here. There are people in our club who have never used a sector editor to repair a damaged disk. Really, there are! (Lots!) How about somebody bring in their favorite sector editor, explaining how it is used, why it is used, and so forth? There are people in our club who don't even know how to use DOS. The program doesn't have to be a professional product, some of the public domain programs are terrific! The price sure can't be beat!!

Sure, we can ask our librarians to continue doing a disk of the month, and use them for

demos. but I have just spent a year as your librarian. Believe me, it is a difficult job to do. That's not just my opinion either, the rest of ACENET feels the same. It is generally a very demanding, thankless task! Let's remember to appreciate our librarians, they are really doing a fine job. They probably contribute more to the club in terms of time and dollars than any other people in the club.

Finally, I would like someone to put together a survey for our club. I want to know what our members want from the club. What are they using? How are they using it? Are most of them programmers? Just hobbyists? Looking for something in particular? What kind of equipment do they have? How many of you have hard drives? Sure hope that more of you are buying modems! Maybe even 2400 baud!

I'd love to be able to call our BBS at 2400 baud! I took an informal hand count at the last meeting and looked like we were still about 50-50 between ST and 8-bit. Is that really true? How many ST users and 8-bit users are there? Are there very many ST users that just have MONO? What kind of printers are they using? Are they interested in programming? Time for another BASIC class, or maybe Pascal this time? If you would be willing to direct this effort, and compile the data, please let me know. I'll be glad to assist with the questions, and develop a format, but this isn't one I have time to lead.

Maybe we need to start some SIGS (special interest groups) again. There has already been a request for a new member SIG. Any other takers? How many musicians are out there? Many an Art Sig? I know I'd love to set aside a time to do some serious digitizing! How about a telecommunications sig?

I noticed that I sure sold a lot of Visicalc templates when I was the eight bit librarian. Maybe we need to have a business sig, and share all the programs that are available for business usage. One of my friends bought an 800XL to keep his records for his shoe store. He almost killed himself using Data Perfect before I showed him Synfile. He now has the mailing list and labels that he wanted, though it wasn't an easy task! He's using SynCalc to keep his finances on, along with the SynCalc templates. Surely he can't be the only one who needs this kind of help. Visicalc isn't the only program that offers templates, either. There are also templates for VIP and SynCalc, too. Some of them are even public domain!

A Crisis is Looming

We are at a financial point in the life of our club where things are about to get very difficult.

Unless we can generate some additional income we will have to institute cost cutting measures to try to keep our noses above water. We have enough money left in our coffers to pay for this month's newsletter, then we'll be facing serious problems. That means we may not be able to pay for the rent on our room. We need your help in this matter. If you have not done so yet for this year, please consider renewing your dues early.

We need to begin to diversify on the way we get our income. Traditionally, the bulk of our income has come from memberships and renewals. The renewals fell to about 2% last year!

Some ideas that have been bandied around include selling coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc., with the club logo, selling public domain software at the AtariFest, raising the price on our public domain software.

One thing that would help is more advertising in the OrnJuce. If you buy something from a local dealer that doesn't already advertise, ask them to support our club! If you order through the mail order, why not ask them to support us as well! And of course, if they do support our club, be sure to patronize them, and be sure to mention that you saw their ad in the OrnJuce, or heard about them at the meeting.

Maybe we should get a booth at one of the Computer Swaps and sell public domain software there. Or start an iron on decal service at a local swap meet. I confess to having missed out on this piece of Americana, I've never been to a swap meet. (Except for the Computer ones, of course!) I don't know good from bad, low from high! We could print the pictures out with an underware ribbon, then give the decal for the individual to take home to apply themselves. That way we don't have to get shirts, either. Maybe we could also digitize people at the swap meet. Is anybody else doing that at swap meets? What do they charge? Come to think of it, is power even available at one of the swap meets?

Two things are needed to help avert this crisis: your ideas and your help. Even if we could go to the computer swap to sell PD software, we would still need people to do it. Too many of you have been sitting on the sidelines for too long. It's time for you to act, or there may not be any sidelines one day. I need to hear from you, and soon!

If you have used a particular vendor for supplying you with coffee mugs at work, please give them my phone number (on the inside cover of the OrnJuce) and ask them to call me. We need to be looking for a company that will allow us to order in relatively small numbers to keep things close to the vest. What we are really looking for is a good way to maximize profits, just to continue operating. Coffee mugs are just one of the ideas. Maybe we should even sell the iron on

decals at the meetings? What do you think? \$2 per iron-on of the picture of your choice from the library? We should do quite well off the AtariFest, that will help (Once the money comes in). But long term, we need to develop strategies that will allow us to continue to operate. Naturally, I want to see us grow and improve our level of service to our members. But we have to sure of the future first.

Please note that none of the speakers that I have lined up are costing the club anything more than a phone call. There are no speaker fees and no travel costs to be borne. These people are coming because they recognize that users groups are a great source of input for them, as to how their product should work, and how the public feels it is working. I really went out of my way to get Monogram Software to come. This is a program with great potential, and I didn't want to have to screw up your impression of their product with me doing the demo!

As always, we need to remember the many other people that contribute to our club. Last month, we acquired a new advertiser in *Logical Choice for Computing*. They are located in North Hollywood. If your like me, and live in Orange County but work in LA, you'll want to check them out. They are about 15 minutes north of LA. They support solely the Atari Computer line.

They have an extensive display of 8-bit software, and several ST's and one 8-bit set up for you to test things out on. Be sure to drop by, buy, and thank them for supporting the club. They were the ones who loaned us the Stereotek LCD glasses for last month's meeting. Andy Latino has converted all of the clubs Print Shop icons into a single Print Shop formatted disk from the Atascii format that they were in. That means there will be 112 icons on a single disk! Nice work, Andy! Mike Fulton has upgraded the BBS to version 2.1 of the Michtron BBS. This will improve several of the "features" we had gripped about, while still making it a very easy to maintain BBS. Mike bought and paid for the original program AND the upgrade out of his own pocket. Be sure to thank him when you see him.

Looking forward to seeing you, AT THE MEETING!

**Write an article for the
OrnJuce today, and get
the ACAOC Public
Domain Library disk of
your choice, free!**

ST X-PRESS

Reviewed By Garry Jones, ACAOC OrnJuice

One of the newest publications devoted to the Atari ST computer is *ST X-PRESS*. Published monthly, the magazine has a professional look and feel with a four color cover and half-toned photographs inside. It's available with disk for \$8.50; without for \$3.95, and subscriptions are available. Indeed, subscription may be the easiest way to get the magazine as it has yet to achieve very wide distribution in the Southern California area (surprising, since it's published locally, in La Habra).

I first heard of *ST X-PRESS* late last year when I ran across a request for submissions. And later, when a promotional announcement began circulating on local bulletin boards, my interest was piqued. With the magazine being published locally, I wanted to see what it had to offer. Unfortunately, *ST X-PRESS* was apparently suffering from the new magazine blues and was virtually unobtainable. When Rich Decowski, the editor and publisher of *ST X-PRESS*, recently agreed to fill my request for a review copy of the May issue of the magazine, I was eager to see it.

I think it was worth the wait. As I said above, the magazine has a professional appearance, and is also reasonably well written and edited. Inside, the magazine is divided into four main sections: Miscellaneous, Columns, Features, and Reviews.

The Miscellaneous section contains an editorial, letters from readers, a BBS listing, a 'grapevine' section covering new product announcements and best sellers, and an ST Archive catalog. The ST Archive lists public domain disks and disks from back issues of the magazine. About 80 different disks are available at a price of \$4.97 for single sided disks or \$6.97 for double sided disks, which offer two selections from the Archive per disk. The prices are reasonable, about the same as most user groups charge, and the double sided disk option is especially nice.

There are seven separate columns in the Columns section of the magazine, five of which are devoted to programming. *Assembling Assembly* by Barnaby Finch is obviously devoted to assembly language programming. The article in the May issue is the second part of a two part article dealing with the creation of a desk accessory shell, which can then be used by readers as the basis for the creation of fully functioning desk accessories. It's a little difficult to evaluate only one half of an article, but the text seems thorough and well written, and while apparently aimed at readers who already have some familiarity with assembly language, the article

discusses some of the demands of GEM programming in a way that would be informative to people writing GEM programs in other languages.

In contrast, *Pascal Primer* by John Davidson has very little text explaining its programming example. While the example, a mouse cursor shape editor, has some utility, the text explains little about it and leaves it up to the reader to analyze the source code.

The other three programming columns, devoted to GFA Basic, Forth, and C, are just beginning, and only time will tell how they will evolve. I hope they follow Barnaby Finch's lead and provide the reader with useful modules and utilities along with thorough discussions of the programming techniques used.

The final two columns are *Critic's Corner*, by Richard Mataka, and *STalking MIDI*, by Stefan Daystrom, a programmer for Hybrid Arts. *Critic's Corner* is a compilation of capsule reviews, rumors, and personal computing experiences of its' author. The May issue's *STalking MIDI* column describes some MIDI principles and offers a simple method for using MIDI instruments within other programs.

The Features section of the magazine includes coverage of the Pennsylvania Atari Expo, an interview with Infocom's "Hollywood" Dave Anderson, creator of the *Hollywood Hijinx* game, and a disk labeler program by Micheal Ferrara. While the disk labeler is an excellent program (I'm using it to label the ACAOC's public domain disks) and the source code is included, both in print and on disk, the article suffers from an inadequate explanation of the code. The printout of the program code is especially nice, though; it's printed in Helvetica boldface with plenty of space between each code module. Readability is much better than in other magazines where the code always looks like it was printed out on a cheap dot matrix printer.

In the May issue, *ST X-PRESS*' review section has more than a dozen reviews, covering games like Gato, a submarine simulation, Infocom's Bureaucracy, Hollywood Hijinx, and Moonmist, Michtron's Techmate chess game, and others. There are also reviews of application programs like Michtron's Trimbase, the LDW Basic Compiler, and Zoomracks II. Generally, the reviews seem objective and thorough, and are given enough space to detail the reviewers' experiences and impressions of the programs. My only criticism of the review section is of the excess of game reviews, which outnumber application reviews by about three-to-one. Of course, a reading of one issue isn't enough to make a fair generalization, but I would prefer to see a better balance between game and application

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reviews.

As I mentioned earlier, ST X-PRESS is available with a disk. Besides the source code and programs printed in the magazine, the disk for the May issue includes a list of BBS's with a reader-printer program which can also save the list in the proper format for use with the Flash terminal program. A compilation of material from Zmag, a weekly electronic magazine featuring news of interest to Atari computer users and telecommunicators, is included, along with another reader-printer program. Finally, there is a folder called INTRO which contains a short program which plays a tune, introduces the ST X-PRESS disk, displays subscription information and public domain disk ordering instructions, and shows three Degas color pictures.

As an added plus, all of the programs in the magazine and on the disk can be copied and circulated in the public domain provided the author's and magazine's names and copyrights are not altered or deleted.

To sum up, ST X-PRESS is an excellent addition to the list of ST-specific periodicals available. Intended for intermediate users and programmers, the series of programming columns, extensive reviews, monthly availability and the comparatively low price for the disk-included issue are the magazine's pluses. Appealing primarily to readers of Compute! ST, with some crossover from START and ST-LOG, ST X-PRESS has the potential to become a very popular magazine in the ST market as it continues to develop and define itself.

Southern California computer dealers currently carrying ST X-PRESS are:

Atcom Micro Center
1421 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
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(714) 667-1575

Logical Choice For Computing
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N. Hollywood, CA 91606
(818) 760-0738

Personal Computers, Etc.
6911 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Canoga Park, CA 91303

Warner's Engineering
3545 Midway Dr. Suite C
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 224-5090

To subscribe, contact:

ST X-PRESS
P.O. Box 2383
La Habra CA 90632
(213) 691-8000

The subscription costs are \$35.00 per year without disk and \$75.00 per year with disk.

Leather Goddesses Of Phobos

Reviewed by *Bill Bentley*, ACAOC OrnJuce

By my count, "Leather Goddesses" is the fifteenth Infocom adventure Erika and I have solved (sometimes with a little help from the InvisiClues). And in many ways, it is one of the best, being reasonably easy and a lot of fun. It is hard to believe that the Infocom people can keep thinking up the dozen or so new and different puzzles that appear in each game, but they certainly haven't lost their touch yet.

In this adventure, you are transported into the world of the pulp science fiction magazines and B movies of the 1940s and 50s, with their super-muscular super-heroes who are devoted to rescuing scantily-clad damsels from multi-tentacled bug-eyed monsters. Obviously, the whole thing is played very tongue-in-cheek; in fact, a good playing hint is: when stumped, try the corniest old movie cliché you can think of, and it will probably work.

The adventure is played on a multiplicity of levels. In the first place, you (the superhero) can be either a man (in a brass loincloth) or a woman (in a brass bikini), and the story changes accordingly. There are also three "naughtiness" levels: Tame, Suggestive, and Lewd, roughly comparable to movie ratings G, PG, and R. However, before anyone starts worrying (or panting) about the sex scenes, I should point out that while the prose occasionally gets a little purple, there are no four letter words, or for that matter, any descriptions that would not be at home in a modern novel. On the other hand, you can be as lewd as you wish with your typeins; the program seems to understand everything, no matter how gross. I am sure that most people would prefer to operate in at least the Suggestive mode, since the Tame version can be ridiculously tame; for instance, when in the sultan's harem, you and the harem girl sit around discussing current events.

As far as the plot goes, you and a klutzy companion must try and save the Earth from the terrible scourge of the Leather Goddesses of Phobos by finding and collecting the items (such as a live mouse) which are required to build an anti-leather goddess machine. Your travels take you to the jungles of Venus, the sands of Mars, a spaceship orbiting Saturn, and Cleveland, Ohio—not to mention the boudoir of the Leather Goddesses themselves.

Every text adventure I have ever tried seems to contain a few stumbling blocks, and this is no exception. Thus, I would like to offer a couple of

hints to any would be players which will not
affect the story but may save a lot of frustration:

Be sure to read the enclosed 3-D comic book --
it contains important information.

2. At the south pole, you will want to <DROP>
something, but if you do, you will be in for a very
long wait. Instead, you must <PLACE object ON
THE DOOR STOOP>. Nothing else will work.

3. There is no way that you can pass through the
death ray on the Martian canal, so don't bother
trying.

One final word: if you are adventuring as a girl
and get into the Sultaness' harem, be sure to
<MEASURE THE HUSBAND> in all three modes.

Actually, the hint book offers three pages of
suggestions for additional bizarre typeins, many of
which are just as hilarious.

Write an article
for the ACAOC
OrnJuce today,
and get the
library disk of
your choice free!



I should have
written an article
for the OrnJuce!



COMING EVENTS!

The September ACAOC
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Write Now!

by *Bob Brodie*, ACAOC President

For those of you that attended the July meeting, this is a little reminder about some "old news". But since many of our members were absent from that meeting, pay attention!

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a proposal before them which can severely hurt computer users. The proposal is called "Interstate Access Charges Exemption for Enhanced Service Providers CC Docket 87-208". This proposal calls for a surcharge of up to \$5 an hour for the online services which your club utilizes to exchange programs with other users, and contact notable people in the Atari community.

For example: GENie, my favorite online service, currently charges me \$5 an hour for 1200 baud access. Under this proposal that would double! CompuServe users would face a similar increase, as would users of Delphi, The Source, Dialog, and any of the other on line services. This would even effect users of the PC Pursuit system, that allows so many users to call all over the country at reasonable rates. Other packet services, like Telenet, are effected the same way.

You may be saying to yourself, "I don't own a modem. What's the point in me getting involved in this?" It's simple. Almost all of the programs in our public domain software libraries for the ST and the XL/XE line come from on-line services. For a number of months, I downloaded individual files from GENie for our members, then placed the files in the library. Garry Jones does the same thing for the ST users with CompuServe. Mike Fulton, ever on the prowl for a good download, is another frequent user of CompuServe. Brandon Murakami is frequently found on Delphi, as is Jon Watkins, and yes, even I've been on Delphi a lot lately.

What we really need is twofold

1) We need ALL of you to call Telenet at 1-800-TELENET. Telenet is acting as a clearing house, so call them! It's a toll free call, register your howls of protest with them. Get your friends and neighbors to call. They are an eastern based company, so keep that in mind when you place your call.

2) We need you to write, NOW! Get that mail merge utility fired up and send off some letters! The three commissioners from the FCC to write to are Patricia Diaz Dennis, James Quello, and Mimi Dawson. Also write to :

Office of Opinion and Review
The Secretary
1919 M Street N.W.
Room 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

You can write to the individual commissioners at the same address. Also, contact your Congressman and our US Senators over this. Let them know that you don't want the cost of information exchange increased. Of course, there is nothing that seems to have more of an impact on government officials than a telegram. I had occasion to deal with Patricia Diaz Dennis when she was with the National Labor Relations Board. I always got a response from a telegram.

The costs of running the club are high enough as it is. If this measure goes through we will all suffer for it, modem users, and non modem users alike. Please, take some time from your day and call Telenet, and write the FCC Commissioners and your federal officials.

Thanks, *Bob Brodie*

Editor's Note:

I thought about including a sample letter to go along with this document, perhaps something like a template that ACAOC members could simply copy and sign, and then mail in, but I discovered a very important reason why we shouldn't do that.

You see, all of the letters that the FCC receives on an issue like this **are** taken into consideration before a final decision is made. However, the actual content of the letters is very important. If they receive 100 letters that say basically the same thing, then during their hearings those 100 letters only carry the weight of 1 letter.

So you see, it's very important that you put down your own reasons for not wanting this surcharge to be enacted. It's OK if your reasons overlap with those of other people and other letters, but you must express it in a unique way. Please write to the FCC and tell them why you don't want this surcharge.

This will affect a lot more than home computer users. A lot of businesses use these same telecommunications methods. For example, gas stations which use those electronic credit card computers call their receipts in at the end of the night. A surcharge will increase their costs and they will pass that along to their customers. Do you really want gas prices to go any higher? That's just one example. The same is true of many other businesses. Write that letter today!

--- *Mike Fulton*

Swiftcalc ST

Reviewed by *John Lavrakas*,
ACAOC OrnJuce

I dislike writing a negative review, but I was forced into this one by the quality of the program I am reviewing. SwiftCalc ST, a spreadsheet program for the ST developed by Timeworks, offers many of the features of popular spreadsheet programs but has too many hangups to keep the user happy.

Features

Let's at least start with the positive aspects of this program. SwiftCalc offers full spreadsheet capability, with formulas, data base features, windowing, title-lock, graphics, and much, much more. It even provides Sideways printing, a nifty feature to have for extra wide spreadsheets. It offers all the basic features you would expect in a good quality spreadsheet program.

Performance

Strike One. Considering this program is implemented on a 8 MHz 68000 microprocessor, its speed is mercilessly slow. And considering it is loaded with bugs, its performance is below average. I felt when I bought this program that I was actually being asked to beta-test it. And at my expense! Here are a few examples: (1) it runs off my hard disk fine, but path names get mixed up so that I cannot store data files in subdirectories, (2) there are no defaults for file names and paths; each time I do a retrieve I have to reenter the path; (3) multiple Label Names are permitted, but only one page worth can be displayed, making "weeding" of unwanted names nearly impossible; (4) I cannot get various formats to activate globally, by row or by column; (5) there are various situations when the system has hung, forcing me to reset the computer. This last condition is a very unkind way to treat data that has just been entered.

Documentation

Poor, mostly because the manual handles only the narrow "best case" path of its example. Deviations are seldom discussed, and heaven help you if you accidentally go down a wrong path, because there may be no easy way out. Timeworks has made a valiant attempt to document SwiftCalc by providing a small three-ring binder with chapters with titles like "The Function Keys" and "Generating Graphics",

but time after time, descriptions are lean on details and on comprehensive explanations.

Ease of Use

This is probably one of the areas that the Swift people are the slowest. For anyone used to Lotus 1-2-3, SwiftCalc is bound to be a bummer, since a weak attempt at best has been made to give it the same feel. Some keyboard commands are the same, or very similar (such as /R for range and /F for format), but many are not even close (such as ALT-O to open a disk file). One of the real pluses of Lotus 1-2-3 which SwiftCalc does not consistently implement here is the use of the ESC key as a universal salvation technique; i.e., with it you can get out of any predicament anytime. For example in the graphics program I got into a loop where I went from Data screen to Dialog box in a continuous loop. No key could get me out, but the RETURN key seemed determined to keep me in the loop forever. I finally got out with a mouse click on an object in the box, but to be honest, I don't know how I got into that loop in the first place. The manual was of no use in explaining the process.

A second failing under the Ease of Use category is the inconsistent use of mouse selection, ALT-key selection and /-key selection for various features. For example to insert cells you may use the mouse, /I, or ALT-I. To print a spreadsheet, however, enter /O or by mouse selection, but not by ALT-O, since it means something else. Even though you may use GEM to start a print, you must complete the options from the keyboard. This combination of requiring both GEM and keyboard selection is especially pernicious, since it takes away the only vestige of user friendliness the program has to offer.

Conclusion

If this spreadsheet were \$25 or \$30 retail, then you may be getting what you pay for. But for \$80 I expected more. For me rather than saving time, SwiftCalc ends up helping me burn time needlessly, frustrating me in the process. It does perform as a spreadsheet program, and for someone who has never owned one, it can be quite a nifty program. But for someone as I who is used to Lotus 1-2-3, its speed, convenience, and quality, SwiftCalc is a mistake to purchase.

[Editor's Note: I have not used Swiftcalc enough to have any opinions about it worth listening to. But I feel I must point out that Lotus 1-2-3 is a mature product (version 3.1 or so, the last I heard), and carries a retail price of around \$500.00. Swiftcalc, on the other hand is a

relatively new program with a retail price of only about \$80.00. (Although that doesn't excuse bugs and inconsistency in command entry.) If you really want a Lotus 1-2-3 work-alike for your ST, then you should investigate VIP Professional. Or maybe consider using the PC-Ditto MSDOS emulator program to run Lotus 1-2-3 itself on your ST. The latter option is a bit slower than on the PC, but it does work.]



I'd like to take some time this month to tell you about a program that I have been working on for the past several months. It's called Fontz!, and it's an editor for creating and editing GEM fonts.

Fontz! started out of the idea of converting fonts from the Apple Macintosh computer over to the Atari ST GEM format. But before I'd actually figured out how to do that, I was already thinking about converting other types of fonts into GEM format. After a while, I had a number of small programs which converted fonts from various formats into GEM format. To be more efficient, I combined all of the conversion routines together into one larger program, which I called Fontz!

At the time, the only GEM font editor for the ST was a very simple one which was available only to developers through the special Atari Developer's SIG on the CompuServe Information Service. It was practically useless, though, since it only allowed very small fonts to be created or edited. Because of this, and because sometimes these fonts I was converting needed some touch-up work, I decided to write an editor to work with GEM fonts.

I used the Fontz! conversion program as the starting point for writing my editor. I figured the ability to load and convert a number of different font formats into GEM format would be a nifty feature to have in a font editor. It's taken several months, but now the program is just about done. Actually, it's just a few minor changes away from everything working correctly as things stand now, but there are a few additional features I'm still

considering putting into the program.

Right now, my program can load GEM fonts as well as fonts for DEGAS, Paintworks/N-Visior HippoWord, and fonts from the Amiga and Macintosh computers. It can scale fonts from one pointsize to another, as well as scale them in fonts for different devices. It has some basic drawing functions for drawing lines, box frames, filled boxes, circles and arcs, and more. It allows you to create fonts up to 300 dots tall and wide. You can cut and paste entire characters and parts of characters. Fontz! lets you control every aspect of the font being edited.

The features that are not in the program yet, but are under consideration include the ability to load a DEGAS-compatible picture and grab a block from it which can be copied into a character. This would be most useful for doing things like using a scanner to scan a set of text characters into a picture file, and then copy them from the picture into the font. Another feature under consideration is some means of testing fonts.

This is a necessary feature, but I think it would be better as a separate program, because of memory considerations.

If you can think of any useful suggestions for features which you'd like to see in a font editor, please let me know. The picture below shows several examples of fonts which have been converted into GEM format.

**This is the
BASIL Font!!**

This is the
Sri Lanka
Font!

This is the PEGNOT FONT!

**This is the
MINK Font!**

**This is the
FOX Font!**

**OUTLINED
PEGNOT!**

**This is the
VENICE Font!**

**this is the
emerald font!**

Now the example picture shown above isn't at full size, but it should serve to show some examples of the many different font styles which can be converted into GEM format with my program. This picture was done with DEGAS Elite, with fonts loaded at once!

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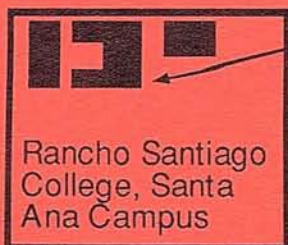
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The meetings of the ACAOC are on the
Second Sunday of Each Month, at
1:00pm, in **Room W-101** of the Phys. Ed.
building of **Rancho Santiago College**, in
Santa Ana, 1 mile south of the Garden
Grove Freeway (22), and 1 mile west of
the Santa Ana Freeway (5).

ACAOC Inc. (Atari Computer Association of Orange County) is a non-profit corporation, and is not in any way affiliated with Atari Corporation or Atari Games Inc.

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ACAOC OrnJuce BBS
24 Hours, 300/1200 bps,
(714) 540-7378

ACAOC 24 Hour Hotline
(714) 838-3099

Upcoming Meeting Dates

September 13, October 11, November 1

First year dues for membership in the ACAOC are \$24.00. Renewal dues are \$18.00 per year for those renewing within two months of membership expiration. An Associate Membership is available for out-of-area people for \$18.00 per year. Membership includes an OrnJuce Magazine subscription, access to the ACAOC OrnJuce BBS, and access to the ACAOC Public Domain Software Library. There is no admission charge for guests at the meetings, although guests may purchase the OrnJuce Magazine for \$2.00 at the front desk. To receive a membership application, send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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